



**Testimony by Jacob Easley**, Dean of Education and Professional Studies at Eastern CT State University  
Board of Regents for Higher Education  
Before the Education Committee  
March 19, 2015

Good morning Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann and committee members.

My name is Jacob Easley, and I am the Dean of Education and Professional Studies at Eastern Connecticut State University. I am here representing the Board of Regents for Higher Education and the four schools of education in the Connecticut State Universities (CSU) regarding **House Bill 7021 – An Act Concerning Teacher Preparation Program Efficacy**.

This testimony represents the collective view of the four deans of education in the CSU system: myself, Michael Alfano of Central, Stephen Hegedus of Southern, and Jess House at Western. At each of our institutions we collectively share a deep commitment to preparing the most highly qualified, diverse educators possible in order to meet the needs of Connecticut's public school children. That said, we respectfully share the following concerns with you regarding this bill.

The proposed legislation requires the Office of Higher Education to report on several data points each year. Please know that we are not concerned with items three (3) through seven (7) of the bill, as those items will be required to be reported on by teacher preparation programs, for program approval purposes, as an outcome of the Educator Preparation Advisory Committee's (EPAC) recommendations to the Connecticut Board of Education. We are, however, concerned regarding items one (1) and two (2) of the proposed legislation, as well as with proposed language concerning Alliance Districts. Specifically:

“...(1) information and data relating to the extent to which graduates of such teacher preparation programs help their students learn, including, but not limited to, data relating to the academic achievement and progress of the students of such graduates...”

- We acknowledge a linkage between teacher preparation and academic achievement; however, currently it is not empirically possible to directly determine the effect, with adequate precision, that individual teacher preparation program graduates have on pre k-12 pupil learning.
- Such linkages would potentially disincentivize candidates from taking positions in urban districts or high-needs schools. Teachers in such schools are likely to have lower student performance, which will then impact how the teacher is rated.
- Such information and data collection, if possible, would extend beyond current institutional research capacity.

“(2) measures for assessing the classroom teaching performance of such graduates...”

- Data related to individual classroom teaching performance are already captured at the local school district level. A system has been proposed to link measures of teacher performance of graduates; however, no such system yet exists.

As stated earlier, items three (3) through seven (7) of the proposed legislation represent data that will be captured as an outcome of the EPAC work. They will be reported on by teacher preparation programs as part of the program approval process. As such, these requirements would represent a redundancy of reporting responsibilities for teacher preparation programs.

Finally, this bill requires:

“..as part of the curriculum, clinical experience, field experience or student teaching experience in a classroom of a school located in an alliance district, as defined in section 10-262u, and a classroom of a school that is not located in an alliance district...”

- This requirement raises several practical concerns for teacher preparation programs. It assumes that Alliance districts have the capacity to engage directly with schools of education, and it assumes that all education students will reasonably be able to access Alliance schools. This might increase competition among teacher preparation programs for already difficult to secure clinical placements.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to your questions.